# Meg's story – International FASD Awareness Month

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Author** | Editorial |
| **Date** | 2020-09-17 10:00:00 |
| **Categories** | Community stories  |

### In support of International FASD month, throughout September Drink Tank is sharing the stories of individuals, families and carers living with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

*In support of International FASD month, throughout September Drink Tank is sharing the stories of individuals and families living with*[*Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)*](https://www.nofasd.org.au/alcohol-and-pregnancy/what-is-fasd/)*.*

*This is Meg’s Story, a foster mum of a son with FASD.*

I am at present caring for a young male who came to be with me at the age of six months, fourteen and a half years ago. I have cared for him as a baby, a child and now as a teenager. During the time he has been with me he has been diagnosed Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

As a baby he seemed to be a reasonably happy child, he seemed to be reasonably normal in behaviour and growth with a few signs of ability in physical activities, memory and awareness of the things around him.

However, when he was 14-months I started to notice some behaviours that just didn’t add up and when he started school, he presented with significant learning issues, struggled to complete daily tasks, very impulsive, totally unaware of danger and with severe anxiety. All of this meant that I myself had to begin caring for him in a very unique way.

The way I describe it is that he requires me to be his external brain every day and that has increased in intensity over the years.

My days are exhausting and at times very emotional. I have a huge financial strain as I am unable to work on a regular basis as he refuses to go to school or demands to be taken late or brought home early. It is necessary for me to be available to support him through this each day.

Imagine you are 15 years old and your world is consumed by anxiety… you struggle to do basic maths, you don’t learn from your mistakes, and you have no understanding of the consequences to your actions or behaviour.

At times you are unable to attend school, special events, go shopping, mix with crowds. Your memory is damaged and you struggle to remember basic instructions. You rely on your parent/s for everyday living skills. You need structure and the same routine every day. You damage property or people that you don’t mean to, but it just happens because you can’t control your impulsive behaviour. You can’t understand basic concepts and you get so frustrated you again damage property because you live in a world where nothing makes sense or you have forgotten what was said to you, you can’t sit still for long because your nervous system is damaged.

All of the above is not a normal everyday 15-year-old, but it is for my foster boy and will be for the rest of his life.

For other children it doesn’t have to be this way because FASD is so preventable. Alcohol is the only product that causes FASD and warning labels can help prevent this happening to other children.

My foster boy recently said to me while we were discussing his anger, “You can’t understand what it’s like, you don’t have FASD, I can’t control it”. That was a very powerful comment coming from him and its very true I can’t understand what he is going through and it saddens me to hear it considering this could all be prevented.

All the daily life struggles that my young foster boy goes through each day and for the rest of his life could have been prevented.

Caring for a child with FASD is a constant struggle. As I have written, it’s a huge struggle on my finances as I have had to stop working due to school refusals, I am constantly having to fight for services and educating professionals about FASD.

People ask me why am I doing this when it’s such hard work and my answer is, I have a boy with a great sense of humour and he makes me laugh. He wouldn’t be the boy he is today without all the hard work I have put in. I know him better than anyone that knows him and often I can predict his responses to questions and situations which is a handy tool to have up your sleeve. I also know this boy needs me like many others because he doesn’t deserve this lifetime disability that could have been prevented.

### Metadata